SITREP.03.04

SITUATION REPORT ON EMERGENCY TRANSBOUNDARY OUTBREAK PESTS (ETOPS) FOR *MARCH* WITH A FORECAST TILL MID-MAY 2004

SUMMARY

1. **Summary:** This report provides an update on the situation of emergency transboundary outbreak pests (ETOPs) in April with a forecast till mid-May 2004 in the various outbreak and invasion areas in Africa, the Middle-East, and Central and Southwest Asia. The report covers locusts, grasshoppers, armyworm and grain-eating *Quelea* birds. A brief overview on the status of each of these pests for the month is outlined in the remainder of this summary and detailed accounts with a six-week forecast are provided thereafter.

DESERT LOCUST, *SCHISTOCERCA GREGARIA (*FORSKAL)

2. The desert locust, Schistocerca gregaria (Forskal), situation continued to further deteriorate in Mauritania and Morocco in March. Large swarms that continued to move from northern Mauritania into southern Morocco have been sighted further northern. From early to late March, swarms were detected in the Draa Valley, the Anti Atlas Mountains, in the Souss Valley, and the northern side of the Atlas Mountains, Morocco. Aggressive control operations have been treating more than 20,000 ha per day in Morocco where close to 450,000 ha were sprayed in March and more than 660,000 ha since the beginning of the current campaign in . Mauritania has reported severe damage to pasture, crops and date palms in the north. Of the estimated 120,000 ha of infested areas, it has been able to treat less than 25,000 ha due to shortage of pesticides and other resources. An estimated 4.5 million USD would be required over the next four to six months to keep the locusts in Mauritania under control. Morocco reported it has spent close to 14 million USD from its own resources to control the current locust outbreak and is looking for an additional 7-8 million USD in assistance to tackle the problem over the next three to four months. Active locust operations have been reported in Algeria where close to 37,000 ha were treated in March. Control operations were hampered in Niger due to lack of resources. Locust swarms were also seen and treated in Sudan, Egypt, Niger, and Saudi Arabia during the month, but at a relatively reduced level. Most of the other western and central region invasion and outbreak counties remained relatively calm.

3. Forecast: More locusts will be seen in northern Mauritania and likely continue moving into the spring breeding areas in Morocco and Algeria where they will further breed and form more swarms. Locust activities will be seen in Air Mountain, Niger. Active egg laying will continue in northern and Central Sahara and in the southern parts of Algeria. These swarms could begin moving east into Tunisia and Libya and south into the summer breeding areas. Swarms from northern Morocco and Mauritania could also begin moving south into the summer breeding areas in the Sahel and threaten agricultural production and food security in the region during the forecast period. Limited locust activities will also be seen in

Sudan, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Yemen. Other countries in the regions will likely remain fairly calm. Any meaningful assistance provided now is a wise investment and will certainly minimize the looming threat to food security and agricultural production.

OTHER LOCUSTS AND GRASSHOPPERS.

4. **Red locust, *Nomadacris septemfasciata* (Surville):** No report was received on the rod locust at the time this report was compiled. It is likely that some locust activities might have been going on in the traditional breeding areas in Tanzania, Zambia, Malawi and Mozambique.

5. No further reports were received on tree locust, ***Anacridium melanorhodon*** (Walker), in March.

6. **Madagascar migratory locust, *Locusta migratoria capito* (L.).** No report was received on the Madagascar migratory locust in March.

7. Zonocerus variegatus (L), the variegated grasshopper is being reported from Senegal in Nioro and other regions. The pest was seen attacking vegetables and fruits. No reports were received on ***Oedaleus senegalensis*** (Krauss) (OES), the Senegalese grasshopper or brown locust, ***Locustana pardalina*** (Walker).

8. The Italian locust, ***Calliptamus italicus*** (L), Moroccan locust, ***Dociostaurus maroccanus*** or migratory locust, ***Locusta migratoria migratoria*** activities in Central Asia are still in recession. Limited activities may commence sometime in spring. AELGA will continue monitoring the situation in collaboration with its partners at the FAO's Migratory Pest Unit (MPU).

9. **Armyworm, *Spodoptera exempta* (Walker).** Armyworm activities continued in several districts in Tanzania during the reporting month. The pest was seen attacking maize, sorghum, and pasture in Dodoma, Kilimanjaro and Arusha regions and other regions in Tanzania in March. A late received report indicated that armyworm outbreaks occurred in Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa and Zimbabwe in addition to the outbreak in Tanzania which was considered as the worst in ten years. No armyworm activities were reported in the other outbreak areas.

10. Quelea quelea (L). Quelea birds were controlled on more than 220 ha in Shiniyanga and Dodoma Regions Tanzania. Control operations were carried out by the MOAFS in collaboration with DLCO-EA. No further reports were received from the other regions at the time this report was compiled. End of summary.

ENVIRONMENTAL SITUATION: WEATHER AND ECOLOGICAL CONDITIONS

11. Light to moderate rain was reported in the spring breeding areas of the desert locust in Morocco, Mauritania, eastern Algeria and western Libya. Green vegetation was present and conditions favorable in northern Mauritania, but dry conditions were reported in Mali and Niger except in a few dry river beds (wadis).

12. Much of the central region outbreak areas remained fairly dry with the exception of a few

places along the Nile and parts of Saudi Arabia coasts. Light rain was reported in the Western Desert in Egypt and northwestern Somalia.

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13. The Eastern region spring breeding areas remained fairly dry and unfavorable conditions persisted in March.

14. Rain continued falling in northern and southern highlands of Tanzania. Central Zambia, Malawi, and Mozambique received light to moderate rain and the rest of the red and brown locust outbreak areas received very light to no rain in March.

DESERT LOCUST ACTIVITIES

15. **Western and Northwestern Africa Outbreak Region:** **The desert locust, Schistocerca gregaria (Forskal), situation continued to further deteriorate in Mauritania and Morocco in March. Swarms that moved into Morocco have been sighted further northern in the country, eaching Souss Valley and northeastern parts of the Atlas Mountains. A small swarm that descended on Agadir, a city in the Souss Valley, was reported eaten up by the sea gulls. Aggressive control operations have been treating more 20,000 ha per day in Morocco where close to 450,000 ha were treated in March alone bringing the total treated since December to more than 660,000 ha. Morocco has reported that it has so far contributed close to 14 million USD from its own resources for the locust operations, but still needs some 8 million USD to tackle the problem during the spring breeding season over the next three to four months. Despite the continued presence of some 120,000 ha of infested areas in Mauritania, only less than 25,000 ha were treated in March due to a critical shortage of pesticides and operating funds. An estimated 4.5 to 6 million USD would be needed over the next four to six months to keep the locusts in Mauritania under control. Active locust operations have also been reported in northern Sahara, southern side of the Atlas Mountains, and central Sahara, Algeria where close to 37,000 ha were treated in March, in what seems to be the beginning of a larger campaign. Locust swarms were seen and treated in Sudan, Egypt, Niger, and Saudi Arabia in March, but at a relatively reduced level. Control operations were hampered in Niger due to lack of resources.** Most of the other western and central region invasion and outbreak counties remained relatively calm.

16. Forecast: More locusts will be seen in northern Mauritania and likely move into the spring breeding areas in Morocco and Algeria where they will further breed and form more swarms. More locust activities will be seen in Air Mountain, Niger. Active egg laying will continue in northern and Central Sahara and in the southern parts of Algeria. These swarms could begin moving east into Tunisia and Libya and south into the summer breeding areas in the Sahel. Swarms from northern Morocco and Mauritania could also begin moving south towards the summer breeding areas in the Sahel. Unless additional resources are made available to support intensified survey and control operations, it is likely that locust swarms will further develop and threaten agricultural production and food security in the regions. Any meaningful assistance provided now is a wise investment and will certainly minimize the looming threat to regional food security and agricultural production.

17. **Eastern Africa, Northeastern Africa, and the Near East Outbreak Region:** **Locusts were also seen breeding in the interior of Sudan and southern Egypt in March. Locust numbers continued decreasing in Saudi Arabia and control operations were carried out on less than 3,000 ha in March as most of them were carried westwards into Sudan and Egypt by the easterly winds. Control operations were also effected in Sudan and Egypt in March.** Most of the other Central region outbreak areas in Africa remained relatively calm during the month.

18. Forecast: **Limited locust activities will be seen in Sudan, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Yemen. Other countries in the regions will likely remain fairly calm.**

19. The Eastern outbreak region remained dry and no locusts were seen in March.

20. Forecast: No significant activities are expected during the forecast period.

OTHER LOCUST AND GRASSHOPPER ACTIVITIES

21. **Red locust, *Nomadacris septemfasciata* (Surville):** No reports were received on red locust in March. It is likely that hatching and hopper developments may have been in progress in the traditional outbreak areas in Tanzania and elsewhere in the region.

22. **Forecast:** Hatching and hopper developments are expected in Iku-Katavi and Wembere plains during the forecast period. Limited activities may also be seen in the other outbreak areas.

23. *No reports were received on tree locust* (***Anacridium melanorhodon*** (Walker) in March and no significant activity is expected.

24. No report was received on the African migratory locust, *Locusta migratoria migratoriodes,* in March.

25. ***Zonocerus variegatus*** (L), the variegated grasshopper is being reported from Senegal in Nioro and other regions. The pest was seen attacking vegetables and fruits. No reports were received on ***Oedaleus senegalensis*** (Krauss) (OES), the Senegalese grasshopper or brown locust, ***Locustana pardalina*** (Walker).

26. The locust season in Central Asia remained in recession in March and no locusts were reported during the month..

27. Forecast: The Italian locust, ***Calliptamus italicus*** (L), Moroccan locust, ***Dociostaurus maroccanus*** or migratory locust, ***Locusta migratoria migratoria*** situation will remain calm during the forecast period and large-scale hatching is not expected during the forecast period although a few hoppers may be seen. AELGA will continue monitoring the situation as it evolves.

28. Note: Shortage of technical skills, resources and infrastructure will continue to impede the capacity of the Afghan national crop protection unit to conduct regular survey and monitoring as well as organize and launch control operations without external support. Thus, locust control in this country will continue to rely largely on external assistance for some time.

29. **Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC).** No report was received on ETOPs from LAC countries in March. No forecast is

being made due to a lack of sufficient information.

30. **Madagascar migratory locust, *L. migratoria capito* (L.).** No report was received on the Madagascar migratory locust in March.

31. **Brown locust, *L. pardalina* (Walker)**: No reports were received in March and no major activities are expected during the forecast period.

ARMYWORM ACTIVITIES

32. **Armyworm, *S. exempta* (Walker).** Armyworm activities continued in several districts in Tanzania during the reporting month. The pest was seen attacking maize, sorghum, and pasture in Dodoma, Kilimanjaro and Arusha regions and other regions in Tanzania in March. A late received report indicated that armyworm outbreaks occurred in Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa and Zimbabwe in February. No armyworm activities were reported in the other outbreak areas.

33. Forecast: Armyworm outbreaks are expected to be seen a in a few places in Arusha, Kilimanjaro and other places, in Tanzania. Other outbreak countries may also experience some armyworm infestations.

QUELEA BIRD ACTIVITIES

34. **Red-billed quelea, *Quelea quelea* (L.).** Quelea birds were controlled on more than 220 ha in Shiniyanga and Dodoma Regions Tanzania. Control operations were carried out by the MOAFS in collaboration with DLCO-EA. No further reports were received from the other regions at the time this report was compiled.

35. Forecast: Quelea breeding is likely to take place during the forecast period in Mozambique, Tanzania, South Africa, Ethiopia, Sudan, Kenya and Zimbabwe. The resulting populations are likely to cause damage to small grain cereals in these countries.

RECOMMENDATIONS

36. Favorable ecological conditions persisted in several locations in Mauritania, Morocco, Algeria, Niger and a few places in northern Sudan and southern Egypt. Control interventions have been going on against the locust invasions for several months, but have severely hampered due to lack of resources by affected countries. **The locusts that have moved into the spring breeding areas have laid eggs and hoppers have started developing in most of these places. This is likely to continue, the locusts further developed and lay eggs giving rise to more swarms during the coming months.** Given the fragility of the ETOP ecosystems, a slight shift in the externalities, such as end of drought, could trigger pest proliferation and significantly offset the already precarious food security in most of the ETOP-prone countries. **Hence, regular survey, monitoring, reporting and aggressive control interventions must be implemented to avert any undesirable consequence.**

37. The Assistance for Emergency Locust/ Grasshopper Abatement project (AELGA), formerly known as Africa Emergency Locust/Grasshopper Assistance under the USAID's Bureau for Democracy, Conflict, and Humanitarian Assistance (DCHA), Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA), continue monitoring ETOP situations in close collaboration with its partners, including the UN/FAO-MPU and

EMPRES Regional Programs, DLCO-EA, IRLCO-CSA, host-country counterparts, etc. and provides assistance and updates.

ACTION REQUESTED AND CONTACT INFORMATION

38. USAID field Missions with portfolios on food security, agriculture, environment, and conflict are solicited to encourage host country counterparts to send us regular ETOP updates. FEWS field personnel are solicited to share with us information they may obtain on ETOP activities. Regional organizations with ETOP mandates and host country partners are kindly requested to send us their updates by the last day of the reporting month or within the first three days of the forecasting months. **Unsolicited reports and/or information on ETOP situations and activities in your region or country are always warmly welcome and much appreciated**.

Please, forward reports, updates, questions, and/or requests to:

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39. USEFUL LINKS

For more information on the weather conditions, you may visit the following web sites:

http://www.fews.net/

http://www.fao.org/giews/english/giewse.htm

For more information on ETOP activities and related issues, you may visit:

http://www.fao.org/news/global/locusts/Locuhome.htm

http://www-web.gre.ac.uk/directory/NRI/quel/

http://icosamp.ecoport.org/

http://www.fao.org/EMPRES/default.htm

40. TO LEARN MORE ABOUT OUR ACTIVITIES, PLEASE, VISIT US AT OUR WEB SITE: WWW.AELGA.NET

41. UPCOMING EVENTS

- **Pesticide Stewardship Networking Workshop**
- **Trainer Training Course on Alternative Application Strategies and Tactics (AAST) for acridid control.**

If interested, please contact: Dr. Yene T. Belayneh

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